

Cardinal Alberoni's letter to the Abbot of Westminster.

Most Holy and Right Reverend Father,

THE Account of your heavy and most unjust Sufferings for the Holy Catholick Cause, and for the Royal and Pious Exile, who is the undoubted, Hereditary Defender of the Apostolick Faith, in the Kingdoms of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, has touch'd my Heart with a most piercing Sorrow and Concern for the grievous Disappointment of our Friends, for the Delay that is given to our Expectations, and for the great and insupportable Calamities, which have befallen so true and so worthy a Son of the Church, so firm a Patriot, and so good a Man.

But Heaven's Will must be done: Unsearchable are the Ways of Providence. Thus did it befall me, labouring for the same glorious Ends; nevertheless, the All-wise God has thought fit, at length, to dart the Rays of his Mercy through the Clouds of my Afflictions, and I am, praised be his holy Name, and the Mother of God, in Expectation of being restored again to my Country's Favour; and I entertain Hopes of presiding over Affairs, both in Church and State, once more, in *Spain*.

Nor do I doubt, *most Holy and Right Reverend Father*, but that the same kind Providence, which restraineth the Rage of the Sea, and which ordereth all Things, will curb the Rage of the *English* People against you, and that, in his own due Time, he will find Ways to bring to pass what the Foresight and Power of Men cannot compass; that he will, e'er long, redress the Royal Sufferer, and set him, peaceably, on the Throne of his Fathers.

Then, Great Sir, will your Righteousness break forth bright as the Sun; then will the Acclamation and Praise of all good Men surround you; then will your Prince reward your Services with Honours, Riches, and Titles, then will you live useful and triumphant in your own Country; and whenever God shall think fit to take you to himself, his Holiness will pay all due Honours and Reverence to your Memory; he will give you a distinguish'd Seat and Station amongst the blessed Saints, and your Name, which is already sacred amongst us, will, then, be adored.

I doubt not, *Right Reverend Sir*, but your own Conscience bears you Witness of the Honesty and Righteousness of the Cause, wherein you are engaged: Here's a Comfort and a Joy which your Enemies cannot deprive you of, and which will afford you more true Glory in the Eyes of God and good Men, by supporting you heroically under your present Persecution, than if you did enjoy the greatest Honours and Preferments under the unjust Usurpation in the State, and under the vile Heterodoxy and Apostacy, which corrupts the Church of *England* at this Time.

However, human Nature is not impassible; it is not Proof against all the Insults of adverse Fortune: The Brave, the Just, the Wise, the Good, are all moulded out of the same yielding Clay,

that the meanest, basest human Creature is made of, and to be *Passion-Free*, may be the Lot of an Angel, but it is not the Lot of Man.

On this Consideration, I send you the sincerest Assurances of all the Aid and Assistance, in this your State of Humiliation, that either I, or my Friends, or even his Holiness can afford you. I will send up my most earnest Prayers for you, to the holy Mother of God; and to all the blessed Saints: I can assure you, that his Holiness the Pope will do the same, and the whole Catholick Church will, no doubt, by one Voice recommend you to the Grace and Favour of God.

I am commanded by his Holiness, to invite you to come and profess the Truth of the Catholick Faith, here at *Rome*, the Mother of Churches; I am to exhort you to return into her Bosom; to reverence her with all those ancient Ornaments of Piety and Devotion, whereof ye have sacriliciously stript her in *England*, and to make your bounden Submission to Christ's Vicar and St. Peter's Successor; and I am order'd to invite you also to come here, and to pay your Obedience to your lawful Prince and Governour, to your hereditary King, till God shall think fit to restore him to his Kingdoms and you to your Episcopal See; both which, we doubt not, he will do, in his own good Time. In the mean while, most heartily exhorting and inviting you, in the Name of his Holiness and of the Holy College of Cardinals, on this Occasion met, to accept of the Honour of filling a Cell in the holy College, of wearing the Purple, and of being dignified with a red Cap.

This is not only due to your Merit and to your Sufferings for your lawful Sovereign and the Catholick Cause, but this will enable you also to support, and conquer those Sufferings, and to persevere and succeed in meriting the same way; that is, in serving your injur'd Monarch, and in endeavouring to restore your Church to its primitive Purity and Power.

Therefore, while I condole, give me leave to congratulate with you at the same Time, most Holy and Right Reverend Father; if you are banish'd your Native Soil, remember you are banish'd a Land of Vipers and venomous Beasts; a Kingdom of Hereticks and of Enemies to God. Remember you are banish'd an ungrateful Soil, only because you were labouring, Night and Day, to serve your Countrymen; and support your self with this Consolation, that, in the same way have many Saints and Martyrs miscarry'd and suffer'd before you; Saints! who are now reward'd gloriously at the Right Hand of God. This, do doubt, Right Reverend Father, will be your Lot, whenever this World shall be so unfortunate as to lose you; but then, consider, in the mean Time, your Sufferings are your Glory; your Punishments, your Reward; your Enemies Curses produce Blessings; their Stripes, heal you, and all the Evil they intend you, is productive of nothing but Good. From being an Abetter of Heresy

and Error, you are become a Patron of Orthodoxy and Truth; from that Sorrow of Mind where-with a good Man must be oppressed, in a Country where he sees Superstition and Tyranny Establish'd, by Law, and where Yokes and Chains are laid both on the Necks and Consciences of the People, as it is under the Usurper this Day in *England* (neither Truth nor Liberty being to be found in that unhappy Kingdom) from this melancholly Prospect, I say, you may be removed to these blessed and pious Territories of St. *Peter's* Patrimony, where Truth, primitive Truth shines unmolested and unmix'd with Innovations, and uncorrupted with Reformatations, and where all the Marks of Freedom, Liberty, Truth, Conscience, Wealth, Knowledge, and of every Thing that is happy and desirable appears legibly in the Countenance of every Man, from our most holy Father the Pope, down to the meanest Peasant in the Field.

Right Reverend Sir, these are not Imaginary Scenes, or rhetorical Amusements, only to comfort you under your Afflictions, and to sooth your sick and sorrowful Mind; no, these are the real Blessings you will be banish'd unto; and all your Countrymen who have travell'd, and have seen the happy Nations, where his Holiness's Doctrines prevail, especially his own flourishing Territories, they will all bear Witness of the Truth of what I say, and confirm the Blessings, which I propose to you, in a Catholick Country.

Finally, Right Reverend Father, be firm, be constant, put on all your Fortitude, arm your self by the Armour of Righteousness, for I am well assur'd, by my Brother *Gualtieri*, the most holy Protector of your Country, that your coming to us will be a most important strengthening to the distressed Chevalier's Cause; and he assures me, that on your Arrival, new Measures shall be, immediately enter'd upon, to recover the late fatal Blow given to our Partisans in *England*, so that your Banishment may be your Blessing, and you may, by this Means, be sooner plac'd at the Head of the *English* Affairs, than if this Incident had not happen'd unto you.

He bids me assure you, that this Miscarriage hasn't slacken'd one Hand or Heart of any Foreigner, engag'd in the Chevalier's Cause; he bids me assure you, that the Numbers are not lessen'd or discourag'd, but rather inflam'd by this Discovery in *England*, and are more ready to rise now than ever; he bids me tell you, that the 40000 Arms lie undiscover'd, and will do so, for the present Prisoners will die sooner than betray them to the Enemy. He affirms lastly, that the *English* Leaders in this pious Cause, are true to a Man, and wait only till we renew the attempt, and Land *Ormond* at the Head of 5000 *Irish* and other Troops and that your own Conjecture is well grounded, that another Opportunity as good as that of the Elections in general, or of Mr. *H—n's* at *Westminster* in particular, will happen within the time pointed out by you; for his Infallibility, the Pope, is very well assur'd, that the Elector of *Hanover* will visit his Electorate this Summer, and then when the Members of Parliament are all dispersed, when Peoples Surmises

are all over, and the *Whigs* are glutted with suppos'd Success, and triumph in the little Conquests they have gained in *Lacy's* Death, and the Disgrace of your Lordship and a few more; when the Army lies, unsuspecting at Eale in their Quarters, and a few Guardships only creep about your Coasts, then will we renew and double and treble our Attacks, then will we not only possess our selves of *English* Rights and Titles, and introduce the true Prince to his Crown, and the true Worship into your Temples, but we will take due Satisfaction of the Offenders who have so unjustly, lately punish'd you and others, and establish'd Wickness in High Places; and we are resolv'd, by all Measures imaginable, to prevent the like Miscarriage, and indeed any Misfortune or return of Disappointment to happen again.

To this End, the Protonotaries, Notaries, Dataries, the Dean of the sacred College, and all our Officers are at Work; Bulls, Licences, Indulgencies, and Pardons innumerable are preparing. Our Votaries are to be incited to forbear no manner of Attempt to favour our pious Design; all Encouragement imaginable is to be given to strengthen the Hands and Hearts of those, who will join with us; his Holiness has already bless'd the Edge of the Chevalier's Sword, and given it its Commission, and you are commanded to have no Mercy on the Lives, Estates and Goods of Hereticks, for Jesus Christ his sake.

And now, lastly, most Holy Father, I am order'd by the unanimous Consent of the Sacred College to pay their Compliments, and to congratulate with you on those most *Excellent Talents* which you shew'd in the late glorious, tho' unsuccessful Defence of your self, made before your Peers; more Learning, more Wit, more Politure, as we are credibly inform'd, not being to be found in the Collective Body of *English* Bishops.

We admire the Energy of the Sentences, and the Beauty of the *Diction*, and shall be proud to have a Person among us; who so much, excels in Elocution and the whole Art Oratorical, and who embellishes every Part of a learned, ingenious, and agreeable Life.

Particularly we return you Thanks for not acknowledging the Title, or paying any Regard to the Person of the now reigning Prince, in your Speech, and for not abjuring or even renouncing your lawful Sovereigns Title: on Account of which honest and courageous Behaviour, his Holiness here with sends you a full and plenary Pardon for all the Subterfuges, Prevarications, Lies, false Witnesses, false Oaths and false Appeals to Heaven, which you were oblig'd to make use of, as lawful Helps in your most just and honourable Defence: hereby excommunicating and consigning to the Devil, most heartily and eternally, all and every Person or Persons whatever, who brought you to your Tryal, and who spoke, wrote witness'd or voted against you. Amen.

In hopes of seeing you soon, I bid you farewell; I shall not cease to pray for you. And am

Holy Father, Your Well-wisher, Fellow-Sufferer, and most Faithful Brother in the Lord, Alberoni.

Dated at Rome this 30th Day of April, 1723.

Printed by *Tho. Mume* in *Smock-Alley*. 1723